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STATEMENT

BY MR. JOSE RAMOS-HORTA

ON BEHALF OF

MOUVEMENT CONTRE LE RACISME ET

POUR L' AMITIE ENTRE LES PEUPLES

- MRAP -

Geneva, 10 August 1992

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Experts:

My name is Jose Ramos-Horta, I am from East Timor, and I am the Special Representative of the *National Council of Maubere Resistance - CNRM-* a national non-partisan umbrella organization encompassing all East Timorese movements, parties and associations struggling for self-determination and independence of the occupied territory of East Timor.

As in previous years I am addressing this august body on behalf of the Paris-based Non-Governmental Organization, Movement Contre Le Racisme Et Pour L'Amitie Entre Les Peuples - MRAP -, which for years has closely followed events in East Timor as well as in many other colonial situations.

This is not the first time I am addressing this body. I have also have appeared as a speaker before other UN bodies, namely, the Special Committee on Decolonization, the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly and I have been invited to intervene in formal sessions of the Security Council when this body addressed the conflict in East Timor.

You might recall, Mr. Chairman, what was said in this august forum by numerous speakers, NGOs whose credibility and reputation are beyond reproach, in the course of the 43rd session.

A consensus statement by the Chairman was adopted last year by the Sub-Commission. This was the product of painstaking efforts by Mr. Leandro Despoue with the full cooperation of some members of this body. This consensus was possible because the Indonesian observer delegation gave its word that the government of

Indonesia would honor its obligations to fully cooperate towards the improvement of the human rights situation in East Timor.

On 12 November 1991, Indonesian troops opened fire on a crowd of civilians mourners at the St. Cruz cemetery in Dili. Before I address the details of this unprovoked and premeditated massacre of women and children, allow me, Mr. Chairman, to throw some light into the historical, legal and political roots of the on-going conflict in East Timor.

(I would like to add at this point that some additional documentation are attached to my statement with further details).

The territory of East Timor was colonized by Portugal for almost half a millennium, probably the longest colonial subjugation of a people in human history after the English domination of the people of Ireland.

What is today the modern Republic of Indonesia is a collection of islands colonized by the Dutch who saw it fit to group all the peoples of that region of more than 250 distinct ethnic groups and speaking 300 distinct languages into a single administrative unit. Pure administrative expediency gave birth to a country. [1]

Conscious of the fact that the Republic of Indonesia is an artificial creation of European colonialism (no more no less than Yugoslavia), the founding fathers of the Republic argued their case on the basis of the "*utis pusidetis*" doctrine and the sanctity of colonial boundaries.[2]

Consistent with this legal defense of their case, Indonesian founding fathers never once claimed territories other than the ones once administered by the Dutch in the region called Dutch East Indies. However, this legal and political approach resulted in an aberration of tragic consequences for an indigenous nation, the people of West Papua whose right to self-determination was trampled upon by war, invasion, annexation and ethnocide.

East Timor, not having being part of the so-called Dutch East Indies, escaped Indonesia's land grabbing and empire building. Not once throughout Indonesia's struggle for Indonesia and even after gaining its seat at the UN did it claim the territory of Portuguese East Timor.

The right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence was never challenged by Indonesia and, unlike China in regard to Hong Kong and Maca, it never challenged the UN General Assembly's decision to inscribe East Timor on the *List of Non-Self-Governing Territories* in 1961.[3]

In June 1974 in my capacity as Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the newly-created Social Democratic Party of East Timor I visited Indonesia and met with, among others, the then Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Adam Malik. After three round of very amicable talks, Mr. Malik issued the following statement which read, inter alia:

The government of Indonesia until now still adheres to the following principles:

I. The independence of every country is the right of every nation with no exception for the people of Timor.

II. The government as well as the people of Indonesia have no intention to increase or to expand their territory, or to occupy other territories other than what is stipulated in their Constitution.

III. (...) whoever will govern in Timor in the future after independence can be assured that the government of Indonesia will always strive to maintain good relations, friendship and cooperation for the benefit of both countries.[4]

The following months I personally maintain regular contacts with the highest Indonesian officials and assured them of our collective good will and determination to fosters close ties with the Republic of Indonesia at all levels. Membership in ASEAN,

close bilateral economic relations, special security arrangements between the two countries, introduction of Indonesian language (then totally alien in East Timor) in our schools, cultural exchange were discussed. The avenues were wide open for a mutually beneficial relationship between an independent East Timor and the Republic of Indonesia.

However, one thing I have learned over the years. The word of an Indonesian official is broken just as easily as it is stated with all solemnity, a lie is a necessity and becomes the official truth.

What I am arriving at, Mr. Chairman, is that the root causes of the problem we are discussing here and in so many other international fora, year after year, is Indonesia's denial of the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence, a right which is universally recognized in many UN resolutions on the question of East Timor, namely eight UN GA Resolutions and two Security Council Resolutions.

Security Council Res. 384 (1975) of 22 December 1975, adopted soon after Indonesia's invasion of East Timor on 7 December 1975, was a unanimous one, a rare event at the time of East-West tensions. Res. 384 called on the government of Indonesia to withdraw all its forces from East Timor "without delay" [5] . Armed by the West and courted by the USSR, a lucky beneficiary of the Cold War, the Indonesian military regime pursued its scorch earth policies that less than 10 years after the invasion had resulted in the death of more than 200,000 people.

In 1974, the population of East Timor stood at almost 700,000 with an annual population growth of 2.3% which would have produced today a population of almost one million. Yet, Mr. Chairman, Indonesia's own statistics, indicate a population of only 650,000 , a figure which includes 100,000 to 150,000 Indonesians now living in East Timor. It is to be concluded that the current population of indigenous East Timor is 500,000, a population defice that verges on genocide.

I understand, Mr. Chairman, that the word genocide has been too liberally used. However, I submit that there is an intent on the part of the Indonesian government to destroy the people of East Timor as a distinct group. There is a well thought-out policy to resolve an eminently political problem through physical elimination, mass killings, executions, forced sterilization of women, deportation and deplacement of peoples and their replacement by Indonesians. Racism is deep rooted in the minds and attitudes of the Javanese leaders who regard the peoples of the outer islands as lower species. Former Indonesian Foreign Minister, a dr. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, referred to West Papua as a "human zoo" and the peoples of East Timor as "backward" who have to be educated and elevated to civilization by the Javanese. It is this racism, coupled with a military ideology and culture which believes in violence as a means of policy to extract obedience, that explains the reign of violence and terror imposed on East Timor, West Papua and Acech-Sumatra.

The 12 November 1991 massacre in Dili was not an isolated event. If anything it was the only one the Indonesian authorities could not cover up because independent eyewitnesses and cameras were on location. The 12 November massacre was an orchestrated action ordered from the above from the Indonesian Armed Forces Chief, Gen. Try Sutrisno, in the days and hours leading up to the fatal day. Indonesian security was fully aware of widespread East Timorese resentment and opposition and that they were prepared to prove to the rest of the world that they resented and opposed Indonesia's domination of their homeland. Indonesian officials were fully aware of preparations by East Timorese youth to demonstrate on 12 November. No action was taken to preempt such a possibility not because the military finally accepted the values of freedom of assembly and speech but because a premeditated plan had been agreed on by the highest intelligence officials to draw out the students and others and liquidate them. This was cold blood murder, Mr. Chairman.

Indonesian authorities were completely unaware that a veteran British cameraman posing as a tourist had been in the country for weeks to film a story about East Timor. This was their only mistake, their only regret.

The subsequent international outcry forced President Suharto of Indonesia to order an investigation into the massacre. However, Mr. Chairman, the Indonesian Military Commission of Investigation lacked impartiality. I wonder how this Sub-Commission would react if Mr. Pol Pot were to be appointed to investigate charges human rights abuses by the Khmer Rouge or if Mrs. Imelda Marcos were to be appointed to head an investigation into allegations of corruption in the shoe and lingerie industries in the Philippines.

The Sta. Cruz massacre was only the tip of the iceberg. One day, Mr. Chairman, truth will triumph and the full dimensions of the tragedy will be there for all to see - and each of you, ladies and gentlemen, who are today in a position to make a difference and save lives but chose not to for political expediency will not escape judgment.

In this very room we have heard words of arrogance by government representatives or their surrogates leveling insults at individuals who tried to speak out for the victims of repression. Governments and regimes, have fallen, empires melted, dictators fled the waves of democracy and the people triumphed.

No amount of lies and insults, no amount of threats and force, will intimidate us and make us surrender. We continue to offer a hand of reconciliation and friendship to those who call as their enemy. I restate our willingness in engaging in a process of dialogue without pre-conditions, under UN auspices, to explore all possible ideas towards a solution. Some of these ideas have been presented before the European Parliament in Brussels, the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and the Special Committee on Decolonization. They remain valid. I thank you.

Notes

[1] Ramos-Horta, Jose. Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor. Trenton: Red Sea Press (1987).
[2] Kissinger, Henry. Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. (1969).
[3] See GA Res. 1542 (XV).
[4] See supre note 1. Chapter 5, pag. 41.
[5] Security Council Res. 384 (1975) was voted unanimously on 22 December 1975. Security Council Res. 389 (1976) was adopted on 22 April 1976 with 12 votes in favour, two abstentions (Japan and US) and one non-participation.